

oranges and dead bodies at Jaffa, or the sight
 of a bather
 with a silver bracelet on one arm and a blister
 on the other.
 'Tu me dis', he writes to his mistress, Louise
 Colet, of a
 famous prostitute he met in Egypt, 'que les
 punaises de
 RucMouk-Hanem te la dégradent; c'est la,
 moi, ce qui
 m'enchantait. Leur odeur nauseabonde se
 melait au par-
 fum de sa peau ruisselante de santal.' There
 speaks the
 author of *Salammbô*. But even in his own
 everyday life it
 was the same with this nature
 'bouffonnement amère'.
 Visitors have described his ink-pot in the
 shape of a toad,
 his paper-weights consisting of two feet he
 had pulled off
 a mummy in Egypt, just as Beddoes might
 have done.
 The sight of an old pair of boots, of his own
 face in the
 glass when shaving, filled him with sardonic
 laughter.
 He once burst into a friend's sick-room, amid
 wild up-
 roar, with a five-legged sheep he had specially
 hired from
 a travelling showman. As for the human body
 —'qu'on
 ajoute à cela les cors aux pieds, les mauvaises
 odeurs
 naturelles, les sécrétions de toute espèce et de
 toute saveur,
 ça ne laisse pas que de faire un tableau fort
 excitant de la
 personne humaine. Dire qu'on aime tout ça!
 And this;
 too, is from a letter to his mistress.

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No less grotesque to him than the human
 body is the
 human mind. Its perpetual misreasonings
 make him feel
 like a musician condemned to live tortured by

listening to I
an unending concert of discords. He
acquired, indeed, a
taste for these also. He set about compiling
Dictionaries :
of Accepted Ideas, albums of imbecilities
from famous ,
authors. Naturally however, for this child
of the bour-
geoisie of nineteenth-century Rouen,
uncharity began at
home, in a truceless war with his own class
and age—the ;
French equivalent of our Victorianism. He
loathed all
that they loved, or liked to think they loved—
their demo-
cracy (je deviens aristocrate, aristocrate
enragé)—their